

# **Planning Board Meeting – October 19, 2015 Minutes**

**Members Present:** Harold Broadwell, Ruth Van der Grinten, Errol Briggerman, Ashley Anderson, Kathe Schaecher, Billy Bryant, Gilda Wall, Judy Silver

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Planning Director David Bergmark, Planner Allison M. Rice

## **1. Meeting Called to Order**

Mr. Broadwell called the meeting to order.

## **2. Welcome and Recognition of Guests**

Mr. Broadwell welcomed the public and Commissioner Gray.

## **3. Chairman and Board Members' Comments**

The Chairperson and the Board had no comments.

## **4. Adjustment and Approval of Agenda.**

Ms. Wall made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Silver seconded it. The motion passed.

## **5. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

## **6. Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Silver made a motion to approve the September 21, 2015 minutes. Mr. Briggerman seconded it. The motion passed.

## **7. Discussion, Consideration, and Action on the Following Items:**

### **Item 7A – Discussion and Action on a Strategy for Moving Forward with the Transportation Plan Update**

Mr. Bergmark said that at the public hearing for the Transportation Plan update, the Town Board directed staff to take the Transportation Plan back to the Planning Board for further review and public input.

Mr. Bergmark said at their September 21, 2015 meeting, the Planning Board chairman indicated his desire to form a sub-committee of the planning board and hold a charrette to gather more public input and participation. He had suggested the sub-committee could host workshops where landowners and citizens could show where they thought future connections were most needed. This information could then be collected from multiple groups over an extended period of time and summarized in order to show where area residents prioritize future connections.

Mr. Bergmark said the possibility of breaking the transportation plan update into sections and bringing non-controversial items forward for action was discussed, but the Planning Board expressed a desire to make their recommendation on all changes at one time.

Mr. Bergmark said there was also significant discussion regarding notification methods. Concerns were raised over the potential cost of doing individual mailings to thousands of households, but the Planning Board thought broader notification measures were necessary. Staff agreed to compile cost estimates for different notification methods for consideration by the Planning Board and Town Board. Mr. Bergmark gave the following pricing options:

1. Inserts in water Bills (**\$250-\$300**)
  - a. The police department recently did this. These would only go to properties with public water, which would limit it to the town limits. For rental properties, it would go to the renters rather than the homeowners, since the utility bill should be in the renter's name.
2. Third-Class Letters sent to all property owners in the ETJ and Urban Service Areas (USA) (**~\$1100 to mail to 2500 addresses**) (this list does not include those inside the town limits).
3. Third-Class Letters sent to all property owners within 100 feet of any collector or thoroughfare road (new or existing) – (**~\$1100**) (this includes town limits, ETJ, and USA).
4. Third-Class Letters sent to all property owners within 100 feet of any new road (**~\$350 to mail to 650 addresses**) (town limits, ETJ, and USA)

Mr. Bergmark said Staff recommended the Town pursue option 4, which would mail a letter to every property owner within 100 feet of any new road shown in the updated transportation plan. In order to mitigate the need for multiple mailings, staff suggested that the letter introduce residents to the transportation plan update and offer them the chance to provide their contact information to staff if they were interested in being notified of future meetings or workshops. He said staff could then add these names to its current list of contacts and individually notify those who wish to continue to be involved in this process without the need to send hundreds or thousands of letters out multiple times.

Mr. Bergmark said cost figures provided were based on third-class mailings, which were delivered in 3-10 business days and were not returned to the sender if the address was undeliverable. He said staff also investigated the cost of sending postcards, but the cost savings for postcards was only 20% compared to third class letters.

Mr. Bergmark said that the usual notification methods would be used, including newspaper ads, the website, and the message board, but that this discussion mainly concerned the mailings.

Mr. Broadwell asked the public who were attending the meeting what they thought of the different alternatives for notification proposed. One citizen in attendance said he understood what was said but he didn't understand where the new roads were. He asked who would be notified. Another gentleman said that if they were going to mail notifications third class they may as well use passenger pigeons and smoke signals. Mr. Broadwell said they would focus on who would receive notifications before they focused on that. He asked if it was reasonable for residents within 100 feet of a new road to receive a notification.

Mr. Briggerman said he liked the option to notify residents near new or existing roads. He said, for example, if Eagle Rock Road was widened as part of the plan, homeowners in the area would be affected even if it weren't a new road. Ms. Schaecher said she agreed. Mr. Briggerman said he liked the idea to send out one notice and ask residents to respond if they wanted further notices.

Mr. Broadwell asked the public in attendance again if they thought that option was reasonable. Several in the audience said they thought it was reasonable.

Mr. Bryant asked why option #2 didn't include those within the town limits. Mr. Bergmark said option #2 was intended to be used with option #1. Mr. Bryant said 100 feet wasn't that great a distance. He said that his preference was to do the combination of #1 and #2, even if it was more expensive, in order to capture the greatest number of people. He said he liked the idea of asking those who wanted follow-up notices to send responses. Ms. Van der Grinten said she agreed. Mr. Bergmark said the only people these options wouldn't cover were homeowners who were renting their properties.

Ms. Anderson asked what they would do to capture the property owners who weren't being notified. Mr. Bergmark said it would be difficult to figure out who wasn't living at properties they owned in town, so they would have to rely on other notification methods to capture that group. Ms. Schaecher asked if they could add a line on the notice that asked the renter to inform their landlord of the transportation plan. Ms. Anderson said that it was unlikely for renters to send the notification to their landlords. Mr. Bergmark said that in-town property owners would be less impacted by the transportation plan, since there would be fewer changes within the corporate limits.

Mr. Briggerman made a motion to recommend options 1 and 2. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Committee Structure:**

Mr. Bergmark said per the Town of Wendell Code of Ordinances, the Planning Board chairperson may appoint Planning Board members to form a sub-committee of the Planning Board. He said one sub-committee member must be identified as the moderator to lead the sub-committee. Mr. Bergmark said the full Planning Board was still required to make a formal recommendation to the Town Board prior to the Town Board taking action.

Mr. Bergmark said during its discussion, the Planning Board should consider whether other individuals outside of the Planning Board should be asked to join the sub-committee. One option was to ask for a representative of the Town's other citizen boards to participate in order to provide different perspectives (Economic Development Committee, Board of Adjustment, Appearance committee). Another option was to ask for a representative from Wendell's school system, civic groups, and churches.

Mr. Broadwell said he thought he would appoint three members of the Planning Board to be on the committee. He said the Board could discuss expanding the committee to include other members, such as Commissioner Gray as the Town Board liaison. He said he didn't want the committee to be too large and unwieldy. He said that Ms. Van der Grinten agreed to be the moderator of the committee. He said Ms. Silver and Ms. Wall had also agreed to be on the committee. Ms. Silver suggested the Board assign one representative from each citizen board: the EDC, Board of Adjustment, and Appearance Committee. Ms. Anderson asked if there was anyone on the committee that represented residents in the ETJ. Mr. Bergmark said the Board of Adjustment is required to have members from the ETJ. He said there might be members in the Appearance Committee and the EDC that live in the ETJ. He said they could make an effort to have someone from the ETJ to fill a spot on the transportation plan committee. He agreed that residents in the ETJ should be represented, and said that even if an ETJ resident wasn't on the committee, they would still have opportunity to give input at the workshops. Mr. Broadwell said that the transportation plan committee wasn't a decision-making committee, and it didn't preclude other planning board members from participating, especially in the workshops. Mr. Bryant asked if there would be a size limit of the committee. Mr. Broadwell said yes.

Ms. Silver made a motion to have three members of the planning board, and a representative from the Town Board, EDC, Board of Adjustment, and Appearance Commission form the transportation plan committee, to include a member living in the ETJ.

Ms. Van der Grinten asked if members of the community would be on the committee, or if they would just give their opinion at the workshops. Mr. Broadwell said the workshops would be the time when they would receive input from the general public.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Workshop Format:**

Mr. Bergmark said the Planning Board should also discuss the preferred workshop format. He said staff recommended having multiple stations that focused on different plan elements. The first station could focus on the existing road network and show the draft transportation plan's recommendation for how existing roads would be improved (i.e. widened to 3 or 4 lanes, bike lanes added, multi-use trail added, etc.). He said large copies of the cross-sections could be available. He said citizens could provide comments on any changes they would like to see to the improved existing road network.

Mr. Bergmark said the second group of stations could have maps of the existing road network with different colored strings representing the different cross-sections for new roads. Large copies of the cross-sections would be provided at each station and would be color-coded to the different colors of string. Each table would make decisions on where to place new roads based on where they think future connections were most needed. Pictures would be taken of each table's map with their strings placed.

Mr. Broadwell said that everyone needed to understand that a transportation plan currently exists, which included new roads that didn't currently exist. He said it was important for the public to see that next to what was proposed. Mr. Bergmark said it was good to have that available as a comparison, but that it might be confusing to have it as a base map for this exercise. Mr. Broadwell agreed, but wanted to make it clear that a transportation plan currently existed and that this was only an update. Mr. Bergmark said he agreed, and that was part of the reason why they didn't go through as robust of a public notification process from the beginning. Mr. Briggerman asked if the new roads shown on the plan from 2006 were included on the transportation plan update. Mr. Bergmark said that many of them were included. Mr. Briggerman said that if you compare the proposed update to 2006, there weren't a lot of changes.

A woman from the public said that it was important to have all of the maps available at each station so that the public would not get confused. Mr. Bergmark said she was correct that they were talking about 2 stations: one with the current and proposed transportation plan, and another with only the existing road network. Mr. Broadwell asked if there could be handouts with different maps that the public could carry around with them. Mr. Bergmark said that was possible.

Mr. Bergmark said a third work station could show a zoomed in map of the proposed realignment of Wendell Boulevard and Eagle Rock Road with details on how the intersection would function. He said at the last Planning Board meeting, a comment was made regarding the desire to break the jurisdiction into quadrants. Mr. Bergmark said with the exception of the Eagle Rock Road/Wendell Boulevard realignment, staff questions what other areas require a 'zoomed-in' approach. He said taking this approach could make citizens lose track of the transportation network as a complete system. For example, when considering Lake Myra road, it was important to consider how it would connect to Selma Road, and ultimately Wendell Boulevard. Likewise, when considering Hanor Lane, it was important to consider how it would connect to Old Zebulon and Wendell Boulevard to the east and Old Battle Bridge Road to the west.

Mr. Bergmark said it was also important to remember that the exact alignment of new roads was not set and that the width of the lines on the draft plan was not indicative of how wide the actual road would be. Zooming in too far could lead some citizens to focus on and react to details which were not established through the Arterial and Collector Street Plan. He said the goal of the plan was to establish the connections between end-points, but the exact layout of the road between those endpoints could vary based on site-specific information which may not be revealed until the time of development.

Mr. Bergmark said staff could set up a laptop with the draft transportation plan loaded that would allow individual property owners to zoom in to their property. The staff or committee member manning the laptop would need to be prepared to explain the limitations of taking this more focused view. He said that the transportation committee could meet individually with land owners or developers. He said he had met with several that had requested meetings. He said the sub-committee could revise this format.

Mr. Broadwell said the sub-committee could decide on the best format for the workgroups. Ms. Van der Grinten said the tricky part would be to anticipate how many people would show up. She asked if anyone had any ideas to bring back to the sub-committee, since this was essentially just an information-gathering committee. Mr. Bergmark said that was correct. He said he had been asked to start a log with the names of people, their concerns, and how those concerns were or weren't addressed. He said the log would then be brought to the consultant and then to the Town Board.

Ms. Wall said that it would be good to have the public workshops in spaces closer to where they lived, such as Hephzibah Church, to encourage more people to come. She said the sub-committee should discuss this.

Mr. Briggerman asked what the timeline was for this process. Mr. Bergmark said he would like this completed by the spring, but he would come back with a proposed timeline.

### **Town Board Update:**

Mr. Bergmark said Staff would provide an update on the Planning Board's recommendation regarding notification methods and committee structure to the Town Board at their October 26, 2015 meeting. This would provide the Town Board the opportunity to make any changes, if necessary, to the Planning Board's proposal prior to moving forward.

Mr. Bergmark updated the Planning Board on the rezoning next to Food Lion, saying that it had been approved by the Town Board.

### **8. Adjourn to Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting**

Mr. Bryant made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Briggerman seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.